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VISTA Online Resource Guide



Welcome to the *VISTA Online Resource Guide*, created to help VISTA Members and Leaders more easily find resources and information pertinent to their needs and service goals. Included in this document are links from the VISTA Campus and more that are organized in eight separate sections. We felt these resources are most relevant to the needs a VISTA member is likely to face during their year of service. We hope it will help lead you to the tools you need to make as much of an impact as possible.

Thank you for using this resource and for dedicating your time to making a difference in your community!



The collage features several key resource websites:

- idealist.org**: A platform for finding volunteer opportunities and donating.
- SERVE.GOV**: A website for finding volunteer opportunities and learning about national service.
- VISTA campus**: A central hub for VISTA members with navigation tools for location, search, and resources.
- Resource Center**: A comprehensive guide to various VISTA programs and services.
- Benefits.gov**: A website for finding government benefits and assistance programs.
- EnCorps**: A website for finding field-tested resources for member recruitment and development.
- FOUNDATION CENTER**: A website for finding funding opportunities and grants.

"I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."

~Helen Keller



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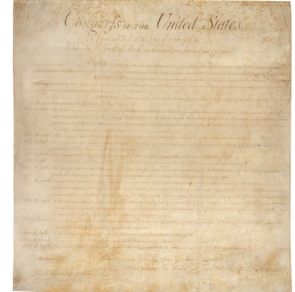
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Essential Documents

Too busy getting things done to search around for important documents? These resources are the tools which you will likely need the most before PSO and throughout your service year. Please note the information for the VISTA Member Support Unit, which can help you if you have trouble accessing anything we've not listed here.



Available Resources

[Going to Training: Your Pre-Service Orientation](http://www.vistacampus.org)—www.vistacampus.org
Find everything you will need to know before beginning your VISTA service.

[VISTA Living Allowance Calendar](http://www.vistacampus.org)—www.vistacampus.org
See when your stipend will be available via direct deposit.

[Member Handbook](http://www.vistacampus.org)—www.vistacampus.org
Can't remember something which was covered at PSO? Check here!

[VISTA Member Support Unit](http://www.vistacampus.org)—www.vistacampus.org
The VMSU is dedicated to helping VISTA candidates and members.

[Corporation State Offices](http://www.americorps.gov)—www.americorps.gov
Find contact information for the federal offices which conduct public outreach and program support and oversee projects.

[My Living Allowance](http://my.americorps.gov)—my.americorps.gov
Access your earning statements, direct deposit and tax information.

[My Service Letters](http://my.americorps.gov)—my.americorps.gov
Print your currently serving certification and income disregard letters.

"The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems"

~Gandhi



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National Service

When you joined AmeriCorps VISTA, you also became a part of the larger community of national service. AmeriCorps and its three branches are a part of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), which also oversees Learn and Serve America and the Senior Corps. Below are a few resources showing the diverse ways that CNCS is promoting service, the history of each program, and how they are related.



Available Resources

[About CNCS Programs](http://www.nationalservice.gov)—www.nationalservice.gov
Learn more about CNCS's programs and special initiatives.

[CNCS Overview](http://www.nationalservice.gov)—www.nationalservice.gov
Learn more about CNCS.

[CNCS History and Legislation](http://www.nationalservice.gov)—www.nationalservice.gov
View a detailed history of the federal government efforts to support volunteerism and community service.

[Learn and Serve America](http://www.learnandserve.gov)—www.learnandserve.gov
Learn about the CNCS program which integrates community service projects with classroom learning.

[Senior Corps](http://www.seniorcorps.gov)—www.seniorcorps.gov
Become familiar with the CNCS program which connects today's over 55s with the people and organizations who need them most

[Mission Possible](http://www.vistacampus.org)—www.vistacampus.org
Learn about the history and mission of VISTA.

[VISTA... In Service to America](http://www.americorps.gov)—www.americorps.gov
Read stories from and about VISTA's legacy.

"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

~Martin Luther King, Jr.



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Skill Development

VISTA members often use online training as an efficient way to continue their professional development. Education resources related to various VISTA projects can be found through the links below.



Available Resources

[VISTA Projects](http://www.vistacampus.org) — www.vistacampus.org

Find resources on economic development, disaster recovery, literacy, and youth development.

[VISTA Capacity](http://www.vistacampus.org) — www.vistacampus.org

Get trained on community development, volunteer development, partnership building, resource mobilization, and marketing and communications.

[The Resource Center](http://www.nationalservicerresources.org) — www.nationalservicerresources.org

Search through a broad range of tutorials and best practices for an assortment of VISTA projects.

[Encorps](http://www.encorps.nationalservicerresources.org) — www.encorps.nationalservicerresources.org

Learn about resources and best practices for supervisory and leadership roles.

"A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner." ~Anonymous



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VISTA Benefits

This section is designed to provide resources that help explain the details of issues such as the Education Award, Medical Coverage, and other technical assistance and general support needs that you might have related to the benefits and coverage VISTA provides during your year of service.



Available Resources

[Starting VISTA](http://www.vistacampus.org) – www.vistacampus.org

Learn the optional, end of service, and basic benefits of being a VISTA member.

[VISTA Policy on Members Attending Courses](http://www.vistacampus.org) – www.vistacampus.org

Attend college while serving as a VISTA.

[My AmeriCorps Information](http://www.vistacampus.org) – www.vistacampus.org

Use the My AmeriCorps portal to view pay stubs, create loan forbearance forms, and much more.

[The VISTA Member Support Unit \(VMSU\)](http://www.vistacampus.org) – www.vistacampus.org

Take advantage of all that the VMSU can do for you.

[Medical Benefits](http://www.americorps.sevencorners.com) – www.americorps.sevencorners.com

Use the Seven Corners website (www.beechstreet.com for NJ & NY) for medically related needs.

[The Segal AmeriCorps Education award](http://www.americorps.gov) – www.americorps.gov

Review the policies on earning and using the Education Award.

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself."
~Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy



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VISTA Lifestyle

This section is designed to provide resources that help deal with the more personal or economic issues a VISTA must face when it comes to living in a manner similar to those you are serving. Of course, low-income should never mean low quality of life, so we have provided the below resources as a bit of assistance to that end.



Available Resources

[I Want to Serve Because \(Tutorial\)](#) – www.vistacampus.org
Engage in a short overview of what VISTA is and why members serve.

[Living on A VISTA Living Allowance \(Tutorial\)](#) – www.vistacampus.org
Learn strategies to boost your budget and how to get in touch with public benefits.

[VISTA Resource Board](#) – www.vistacampus.org
All-stop-shop for all things VISTA from food/rent ideas to getting general program support.

[VISTA Handbook](#) – www.americorps.gov
See [Chapter 5: Financial Support](#) for details on the living allowance, taxes, and more.

[Applying for Food Stamps](#) – www.fns.usda.gov/fns/
Find your state listing to apply for food stamps online.

[Government Benefits](#) – www.govbenefits.gov
Use this website to find state and federal benefit programs across the nation.

"No man can live happily who regards himself alone, who turns everything to his own advantage. You must live for others if you wish to live for yourself."

~Seneca



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Community Clusters

As a VISTA member, you are part of several new communities including the locality in which you reside, the network of other VISTA members with whom you relate, and the non-profit environment in which you volunteer. The resources below compliment the integration process for each of these communities.



Available Resources

[Strategies and Suggestions for Effective Community Entry](#) — www.vistacampus.org

Follow the DO's of community entry to adapt to a new work environment.

[Navigating the VISTA Lifecycle](#) — www.vistacampus.org

Learn the typical stages of a VISTA term and understand the VISTA member role.

[Not Always What You Think](#) — www.vistacampus.org

Become aware of the assumptions made about others.

[Diversity and Cultural Competency](#) — www.npgoodpractice.org

View best practices in promoting diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency.

[VISTA Experience in Poverty](#) — www.nationalservicerresources.org

Hear what members have to say about what it is like to be a VISTA living in poverty.

[VISTA OSOT Resource List](#)—www.nationalservicerresources.org

Get acquainted with local neighborhood resources.

[Understanding the Changing Non-Profit Sector](#) — www.idealists.org

Find helpful resources on understanding the non-profit sector.

[Culture Matters](#) — www.peacecorps.gov

Gain cross-cultural understanding as it is taught to Peace Corps members.

"We are in community each time we find a place where we belong."

~Peter F. Block



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Working in the Nonprofit Sector

There are taxes for public office and profit for private industry, yet what makes the work of countless non-profit/non-governmental organizations go?

We all do with the help of funding and volunteer resources equally countless in number. Below is a short list of resources geared towards organizing the tools of the nonprofit trade.



Available Resources

[VISTA Campus Marketing and Communications](http://www.vistacampus.org) – www.vistacampus.org
View the many VISTA Campus resources for marketing.

www.fundraising123.org – Resource for training and industry best practices.

www.philanthropy.com – News and resources for the nonprofit industry.

www.afpnet.org – Resources for fundraising professionals.

www.nfg.org/cotb/ – Community organizing basic principles.

www.guidestar.org – Financial information about nonprofits, foundations, and grant agencies.

www.volunteermatch.org – Volunteer recruitment resource.

www.foundationcenter.org – Tools and resources geared towards grant writing/seeking

"You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."

~Woodrow Wilson



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Life After VISTA

So you've spent your year investing in the lives and projects of others and now comes the time for investing in your own post-service career. A year of VISTA can provide many a meaningful experience and help launch you into the public, nonprofit and even private sector and the resources below are designed to help you bridge the gap between your current service experience and what comes next.



Available Resources

[Next Steps: Life After Americorps Workshop](http://www.nationalservicerresources.org)—www.nationalservicerresources.org
Access this workshop for a [PDF Workbook](#) and [Power Point](#) presentation that could be used personally or for training.

[What's Next? Life After Your Service](http://www.encorps.nationalservicerresources.org)—www.encorps.nationalservicerresources.org
View an updated version of the above resources.

[Using Your Education Award Effectively](http://www.encorps.nationalservicerresources.org)—www.encorps.nationalservicerresources.org
Get tips on making the most of your education award.

[Institutions that Match the Education Award](http://www.americorps.gov) – www.americorps.gov
See a general list of institutions that match the Education Award in some way.

[College Cost Reduction and Access Act](http://www.americorps.gov) – www.americorps.gov
Make the most of your education award. Please also see ibrinfo.org or CNCS's [FAQ](#) document for more information.

[USA Jobs](http://www.usajobs.gov)—www.usajobs.gov
Use this to find almost all federal job postings.

Idealist.org—Social Sector skill development and job searching engine.

"He who wishes to secure the good of others, has already secured his own."
~Confucius